

# **SOCIALIST STUDIES**

**NO. 18**

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**OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF**

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF  
GREAT BRITAIN**

**Communications to: General Secretary, 71 Ashbourne Court,  
Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB**

## THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

# OBJECT

*The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.*

## DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO...  
The Socialist Party of Great Britain,  
71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

## REDEFINING REFORMISM

The Socialist Party of Great Britain has always been clear about support or opposition to reforms. A socialist party cannot advocate reforms as doing so would attract the support of people interested more in these reforms than in Socialism. In their circular **What do we mean by Reformism?**, the Clapham based Socialist Party's Islington Branch argue that reformism should be redefined as:

*..an attempt to modify the way capitalism functions as an economic system... What we call reformism must amount to a programme of economic reforms. This in turn, suggests that reforms of a non-economic kind, even if implemented via the state, are not strictly reformist. Insofar as they are directed towards problems that lie in the realm of society's 'superstructure' (political, religious, cultural, etc.) - as opposed to its economic 'base' - we can label them as consciousness-modifying activities".*

The practical implications for their party would involve deciding whether particular reforms should be opposed as economic or might be tolerated ('consciousness-modifying'). Take the key feminist demand for equal pay. Since pay is an economic issue, they should oppose this demand. But since 'sexism' is involved, the matter is also non economic.

Apparently while economic reforms come up against capitalism's iron laws, other reforms, in the realm of 'superstructure' are supposed to be less futile. The following quotation shows the utter confusion of those who want to support certain undefined reforms in Socialist propaganda:

*"Economic reforms are an attempt to modify capitalism. Political reforms are an attempt to change the political superstructure that presides over capitalism. There is clearly a qualitative difference between them." (Discussion Bulletin 72 July-August 1995).*

This is a distinction without a difference. The effect of this re-definition of reformism would be to enable the Clapham based Socialist Party to broaden its appeal; to attract those who oppose racism or dictatorship; those whose prime concern is not in *ending* capitalism and establishing Socialism, and for whom class is a secondary issue, an outmoded concept.

The Islington Branch circular (a member of whom publishes the Discussion Bulletin) shows how bogus is the claim of the Clapham based Socialist Party to be a socialist party. There is a world of difference between this opportunist re-definition of reformism and the Principles of The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB).

The SPGB view has always been clear:

*"Reforms had always blunted the theoretical weapon, and continued to do so until genuinely socialist conceptions became submerged in a welter of reform; instead of being just steps on the way to the achievement of Socialism..., the achievement of reform became ends in themselves..."*

**(The Communist Manifesto & The Last 100 Years SPGB 1948 p26-27)**

The Islington circular states that the Socialist Party policy is to "press for the establishment of elementary political rights" where these do not exist. That policy also was rejected by the SPGB.

In several editions of our pamphlet **Questions of the Day** we argued:

*"Unemployment, poverty, insecurity and other evil effects of capitalism remain, no matter whether the form of its political administration be democratic or dictatorial. Freedom to cry working class misery from the house tops will not, in itself, abolish that misery". (Page 16, 1978 edition).*

Only Socialist understanding and class consciousness would make democracy, as a weapon, useful, not suicidal, for the working class. However "democratic" capitalism may be, it simply cannot operate in the interests of the working class. This point cannot be argued effectively by those who blur the issue.

### **BASE & SUPERSTRUCTURE**

Underlying the Islington Branch argument is the theoretical misconception that 'base' and 'superstructure' are separate. In the circular, there is a repeated emphasis on the difference between the (economic) base and the (political, cultural, etc.) superstructure. This arises because of a lack of understanding of historical materialism, and in particular, their ignorance of the *interaction* between base and superstructure.

In several letters, Engels warned correspondents against a simplistic view of historical materialism. While economic conditions primarily determine historical development, this is not the only factor:

*"Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic etc. development is based on economic development. But all these*

*react upon one another and also upon the economic base... There is interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself". (Engels to Starkenburg 25th January 1894).*

The policy of combining opposition to all **economic** reforms with support for selected **political** reforms is totally ignoring the reality of interaction between base and superstructure. There is no difference between economic and political reforms, as far as political action is concerned.

We repeat the SPGB argument:

*"...a socialist party which advocates reforms would attract the support of people interested more in these reforms than in Socialism. In these circumstances, the party would be dragged into compromise with capitalism... As Socialism can only be set up when a majority of workers understand and want it, a socialist party must build up support for this aim alone".*  
(*Questions of the Day* page 27, 1978 edition).

There are plenty of parties advocating reforms. A socialist party can have only one aim -- Socialism. To flirt with reforms is pure opportunism.

For more information about the interaction between base and superstructure see the SPGB's new pamphlet

#### THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Price £1.00 postage included, apply to General Secretary

## THE POLITICS OF POVERTY

In 1902 S. Rowntree published his **Poverty: a Study of Town Life** which he continued in 1911 with his report **Unemployment: a Social Study**. Almost a century later his successors, The Rowntree Trust, produced their survey of poverty in the 1990s. The report's authors conclude with a number of predictable social reforms: more training for the unemployed; extra social security; a minimum wage and increased subsidies for social housing.

Like many other proposals, most have been tried in the past and have failed to deliver. The unemployed for example, can be retrained all they like - they could even be taught the darker passages of Hegel's logic -- but if there is no job at the end of the training period, they will remain unemployed. The employers know better than social reformers when to hire workers and that is when it is profitable to do so.

**The Rowntree Trust Report** also trots out the usual idealistic platitudes. Here is one by Sir Peter Barclay and John Hall, both of whom sit on the Committee and teach at the London School of Economics:

*"Everyone shares an interest in the cohesiveness of society".*

Since they are referring to capitalist society we can ask the pertinent question *"Do they?"*. Do workers share an interest in the cohesiveness of capitalism? The working class certainly do not have an interest in capitalism where the means of production and

distribution are owned by a minority. As a social system capitalism does not exist to share out equally the social wealth which is produced. The wages system distributes not according to need but to the subsistence level necessary to produce and reproduce the workforce as an exploited class. It is only through positive trade union action, when trade conditions have permitted it, that workers have managed to raise their income and improve working conditions.

Nor can capitalism be harmonious. Social cohesion does not exist in a society divided by class. Where one class is exploiting another the result is social conflict. Capitalism is fragmented and divisive, crime, violence and alienation are reflections of this.

**The Rowntree Trust Report**, like all the other reports preceding it, has been seized upon by the media and the Labour Party as a convenient rod with which to beat the Tories. It is a rod of straw. Poverty is supposed to have increased because of the evil policies of the Conservative government. Not so. Poverty is not caused by governments but by the very nature of capitalism, which various politicians administer as best they can on behalf of the employing class. There was poverty under both previous Liberal and Labour administrations, just as there is poverty under the Tories.

The fundamental error made in the Rowntree report is the use of a shallow and vulgar sociology. Nowhere is an analysis of capitalism undertaken. The wages system is unquestioned, and the report fails to acknowledge the wealth enjoyed by the employing class in relation to what the rest of society has to make do with. The report is class blind. Nowhere does it offer a penetrating analysis of poverty structured in terms of class, competing class interests and

class struggle. For socialists poverty and capitalism are inseparable. Both the politics of poverty and its cause are interrelated.

Poverty occurs because the majority are rationed by the amount of their wages and salaries. Their limited access to the social wealth which they have produced, restricts their ability to develop their potential as human beings. The institution of private property is the impediment preventing social needs from being met, and private property is protected by the laws and forces of the state.

The politics of poverty flows from this social reality. Some politicians try to deny this. They claim poverty is a natural occurrence, or it is caused by workshy idlers. Some claim poverty is being eradicated and that we enjoy a greater standard of living compared with the turn of the century. The social reformers, on the other hand, claim that there is a social problem but that it can be resolved within the framework of capitalism through enlightened legislation or change of government.

What all these false perspectives fail to recognise is that the poverty socialists want to discuss is not about how well the working class is doing now compared with 1900; nor is it about falling or rising wages compared with profits. Workers are poor because of their class position, which has remained the same throughout the century. The working class will remain poor compared with the employers until the means of producing social wealth is brought under common ownership and democratic control by all of society, and the productive forces allowed to expand unrestricted by the bottleneck of the market. This is where the debate about poverty should take place; about how we actually live today and how we could live today.

The agenda set by the social reformers should be replaced by an agenda set by social revolutionaries. The working class should not be insulted by subsidies, work fare, training for wage slavery or living in second rate housing. Workers should want control over their own lives, and until they get this control and no longer remain an exploited class, no-one is in a position to end poverty.

This brings us to the politics of poverty. Why do the workers live in poverty? Why can't they just take what they need? The answer is quite simple. The working class are prevented from having control over resources -- of directing production and distributing goods to those who need them -- because of the institution of private property ownership. This institution is protected by force: the force of government, the police, armed forces, judiciary and prisons etc.

To remove this force which keeps the working class in poverty in relation to the life of luxury enjoyed by the employing class, requires conscious political action. It requires the formation of a socialist majority to capture the powers of government, national and local, and to use the machinery of government for the emancipation of the working class. Until then, the working class will carry its poverty with it, snail like, from one generation to another.

## WAGES, PRICES & INFLATION

Why are Socialists interested in the question of inflation? In many respects we are not. Whether the price level is rising or falling or if it remains steady, workers are still an exploited class within capitalism and its wages system.

Our interest in inflation arises partly because of the argument put out by capitalist politicians, the media and the tame economists, that inflation is caused by workers' wage increases. This argument serves the purpose of the employers and is regularly trotted out whenever workers are demanding higher wages.

If the late Lord Wilson (ex Labour Prime Minister) is to be remembered at all, it will not be for his inability to get beyond the first page of **Capital**, nor for his empty remark about "*the pound is safe in your pocket*", but for spreading the ruling class idea that "*One man's wage increase is another man's price increase*". Since wages are simply the price of labour power, Wilson's assertion is nonsense.

This confusion about wages, prices and inflation lives on after Wilson as is shown in the article **The Shocking Truth about Inflation: it could do us a power of good**, by Neal Ascheson (**Independent on Sunday** 16th July 1995). Mr. Ascheson believes that:

*"The entry of Latin America, Eastern Europe and China into the world economy will prove deflationary because of their abysmally cheap labour."*

Not only are these countries already in the world economy and workers there engaged in trade union activity against employers for higher wages and better working conditions, but also Ascheson's views on low wages causing prices to fall as 'deflationary' are as wrong as Wilson's assertion that higher wages cause higher prices.

Ascheson's confusion is in equating competition in bringing down prices in some markets with 'deflation' i.e. the general fall in price levels across the board. The argument is typically protectionist, expressing the fears of Western capitalists about the inroads into their markets by foreign competitors with lower costs of production. These fears often lead to the claim by politicians, journalists, economists and other agents of the capitalists, that wages are too high and must be brought down.

#### THE FACTS ABOUT INFLATION

Historically the facts destroy this argument. Wage increases do not cause higher prices. In Britain price levels remained steady between 1850 and 1814, but average wages went up by nearly 90 per cent during this period. This was possible because of improved trade union organisation and because the output of the worker increased by something like 1 to 1.25 per cent each year. If Ascheson and Wilson are right that increased wages cause inflation, we must ask why was there no inflation between 1850 and 1914? Why has there been persistent inflation since 1938?

A history of the subject helps us to answer these questions. There was inflation during the Napoleonic Wars, 1793 - 1815, as there was during the First World War 1914 - 1918. After the Napoleonic wars, the government reduced prices by 45 per cent and a more or

less stable price level was maintained from 1822 until 1913. When war broke out in 1914 and again in 1939, prices jumped immediately; in the preceding months there had been an increase in the amount of inconvertible paper money sufficient to account for these rises in price.

When war breaks out the government and companies, anticipating scarcity of various commodities, go into the market offering almost any price to get what they want, thus pushing up the price of those particular commodities

In the great German inflation of 1920 - 1923, it was noticed that prices at first rose less than the increase of currency. Possibly manufacturers and retailers may have thought that the increase of currency was only temporary. Then prices and increases in currency rose more or less in line, but when it became obvious that the government was set on a course of continual hyperinflation, prices rose in advance of the increase of currency.

In publishing figures representing the estimated amount of notes and coins in "circulation with the public" the monetary authorities came up against the problem of the war time black market and post war 'black economy', because large amounts of currency (how large could only be guessed), had gone out of circulation and into those transactions. It is thought that a large part of that quantity of notes and coin has by now, come back into circulation with the public.

When inflation takes place the purchasing power of each £1 falls, which has the consequence (all other factors remaining constant), that the market price of gold rises correspondingly. When the government in 1919 decided to reduce prices and return to the gold

standard, they imposed on the Bank of England a policy which progressively reduced the amount of notes in circulation. The target aimed at was to reduce the market price of gold until it fell to the point at which it was approximately £4.00 per ounce, thus corresponding with the legal content of the pound. In fact the restoration of the gold standard took place before the market price of gold had quite fallen to that level.

If a future government decided on a policy like that of the government of 1920, they could again instruct the Bank of England to limit the quantity of currency in circulation. According to an article in the **Independent** (24th April 1990), this policy has been "*vehemently opposed by the Bank of England*" and rejected by the government. Inflation has continued.

The reason there was no inflation between 1850 and 1914 is that there was no excess issue of currency which was backed by gold. Since 1938 there has been continuous inflation as government expenditure has vastly increased with corresponding additional borrowing. The depreciation of the currency by governments offers a short term solution, by reducing their burden of debt. (See **Socialist Studies No. 16**) Before 1925 governments, their advisors and numerous economists understood inflation, but since then politicians and economists appear to have lost all knowledge of the subject. (See **Banking & Credit Myths**, SPGB pamphlet).

Inflation is caused by the government, through the Bank of England, putting an excess amount of notes and coin into circulation. In 1938 there £5442 million notes and coin in circulation. By 1990 there were £15,000 million, and by December 1994 there were £21,700 million. (**Bank of England Inflation Report** published by the Monetary Statistics Group, 1995)

## MARX, ECONOMISTS & INFLATION

So what is the idea behind an "excess issue of notes and coin in circulation". It was Marx in the first volume of **Capital** who gave the best definition of "excess". He said excess occurs when the amount of notes and coin in circulation is greater than the amount of gold that would be needed if all the currency was gold (or gold convertible notes). He also pointed out that another consideration to be taken into account is the velocity (speed) of circulation, so that when trade is sluggish, less currency is needed than when trade is brisk. The explanation given by Marx is as follows:

*"If the paper money exceed its proper limit, which is the amount of gold coins of the like denomination that can actually be current, it would, apart from the danger of falling into general disrepute, represent only that quantity of gold, which, in accordance with the laws of the circulation of commodities, is required and is alone capable of being represented by paper. If the quantity of paper money issued be double what it ought to be then, as a matter of fact, £1 would be the money name, not of 1/4 of an ounce, but of 1/8 of an ounce of gold. The effect would be the same as if an alteration had taken place in the function of gold as a standard of prices. Those values that were previously expressed by the price of £1 would now be expressed by the price of £2."*

**(Capital Vol 1, Kerr edition page 144)**

Marx's example tells us that if the amount of inconverntible notes is double the amount of gold coins that had been in circulation, the price level will double. Conversely, if the amount of inconverntible notes is half the amount of gold coins that had been in circulation, the price level fall to half.

Britain has seen all three conditions: no inflation (under the gold standard); deflation 1920 --1925; inflation 1914 --1920, and from 1938 onwards. Prices by the 1990's were 26 times what they were in 1938, and some 17 times the level of 1945.

As we have seen Marx defined inflation in terms of the amount of paper currency being in excess of the quantity of gold that it replaces. That quantity of gold is not an unchanging quantity. It will increase with an increase of total production, or of population. But Marx noted that with the greater development of banking, and the consequent increased use of cheques to make payments instead of making payments by notes and coin, the 'needed' amount of currency increases less than the growth of production or population. So that if production expanded by 10 per cent, the needed amount of notes and coin would increase by less than 10 per cent.

In *Value, Price & Profit*, Marx pointed out that in England, the amount of currency in circulation in 1862 was almost the same in 1862 as in 1842 in spite of the big increase in monetary transactions that had taken place in that period. When the volume of total production falls (as in the depression which began in 1990), the needed amount of currency also falls. So that if the actual amount of currency remains unchanged when production is falling, this is inflationary. In fact the amount of notes and coin has continued to increase since 1990. Total production, and therefore the needed amount of currency has more than doubled since 1938.

Among the economists, besides Marx, who understood inflation, were Ricardo, J.S. Mill, and later Professor Cannan of the London School of Economics. The decline and fall of economic

understanding of inflation began with J.M.Keynes. It was Keynes who persuaded governments that they should add to notes and coin the amount of deposits on current account in the commercial banks and regard the whole lot as 'currency' or 'money', and that the Bank of England need no longer control the amount of notes and coin in circulation. Cannan told Keynes that he, Keynes, did not understand how easily governments are tempted into inflation. Keynes ignored this warning. Monetarist doctrines (both of the Keynes and Friedman variety) teach that prices are controlled by the amount the big banks lend and are measured by the size of deposits. Since 1938 government policy is to control 'bank lending' and watch the size of bank deposits. (See Bank of England Fact Sheet **Monetary Policy in the U.K.** May 1994 and the Bank of England **Inflation Report** August 1995.)

The last non Marxist to fully understand inflation, Professor Cannan, noted and deplored the changed definition of currency. He forecast that, once on the slippery slope of changing definitions, governments and their advisors would never be able to stop re-defining. They would add deposit accounts, savings bank deposits, building society deposits and then stocks and shares. It has all happened as Cannan predicted. The Bank of England has just reached the stage of considering including certain government securities 'approaching maturity' in their definition of money.

Even if some government did rediscover what Marx said about inflation, or read Cannan's **An Economist Protests**, this will not change the fundamental nature of capitalism with its unrelenting competition, periodic trade depressions and unemployment. Nor would it stop wars, poverty and other social problems facing the working class.

## ARE YOU WORKING CLASS?

According to the political writer Ian Aitkin (New Statesman, 4th August 1995), there has been a fundamental shift in politics. On the one hand there is a "*diminishing number of people who see themselves as working class*" and on the other, there has been "*the disappearance of old fashioned deference*".

In the past, both Labour and Conservative politicians appealed respectively to either those who 'resented their bosses' or those who 'respected status and wealth'. Mr. Aitkin believes this form of politics is over. Instead, politicians target specific interest groups or pander to the many base prejudices of the electorate. What politicians do not do is to tell the working class the truth about their class position.

Unlike capitalist politicians, Socialists do not want to target special issue groups like feminists, homosexuals or "Middle England". We reject the concept of leadership and the cultivation of personality politics. We have nothing to do with reactionary sentiments like racism, nationalism, religion and other primitive states of mind. The Socialist case is directed at the entire working class. Unlike the Labour Party (and the others), we are not interested in getting votes in order to administer capitalism. Labour chase after a non socialist working class for their votes. Socialists on the other hand want to make socialists, so that, in time, a socialist majority can be used by the working class to abolish capitalism and establish Socialism.

Whether they like it or not, the working class form the majority group within capitalism, regardless of their race or sex. Workers

are those who have to sell their mental and physical abilities to the employing class. Whether the worker is relatively highly paid or low paid makes no difference to his or her *class* position. As a class the workers are exploited by the employers; what the workers produce and distribute is taken away from them, only a portion of which is returned to the workers in the form of wages and salaries. It is the workers who face the innumerable social problems like unemployment, which no politician, Labour, Tory, Liberal Democrat, Nationalist etc., can solve for them. The solution to the problems facing the working class lies in their grasping socialist ideas, and forming a socialist majority in society.

We can understand why people do not like to consider themselves as working class. It implies subservience, powerlessness and a low social position. Yet this is exactly what it means to be a worker, whether the worker is a Professor of Philosophy, a government bureaucrat, a lawyer, or a shop assistant. There is no control over production and distribution, nor over the conditions of work. Nor is there influence over the quality and interest of the work produced, nor any say in the direction of production and for what purpose.

This dovetails with the question of deference raised by Mr. Aitkin. His "true" workers no longer doff their cloth caps to employers or call the boss "Master" or "Sir". Nor are there many workers clinging to the feet of the local squire, an image beloved of Ealing comedy films and Hollywood.

However the Oxford English Dictionary defines 'deference' as "*Compliance with advice of one superior in... position*". This is exactly what workers have to do at work. It is the employer's business. The employer decides what work is to be done within

what time limits, with the sole aim of making profit. The boss gives the orders and expects to be obeyed. Being a worker is also about obedience and deference catches this subservience well. Asked by his daughter what he thought the most degrading aspect of being a worker was, Marx replied "subservience".

This social reality cannot be hidden by pretending the worker's class position does not exist. Employers, by virtue of their ownership of the means of production and distribution, have economic power over workers. This economic position is protected by political power and the forces of the state. Socialists do not want to see the continuation of classes and class relations. We want to see the ending of classes. However, to end classes requires conscious political action. The establishment of Socialism can only come about by a socialist majority, through the ballot and Parliament, gaining control of the machinery of government. Until the workers face the facts of their social position under capitalism, and decide to change it, they will remain an exploited and subservient class.

**"I got my inspiration from the Socialist Party of Great Britain, founded in 1904. It was and is the real Marxist Party. I listened to them, they were right about the war and society. They put the real programme of Marxism forward; other parties who said they were socialist were confused about it. Marxism is the true economics, not capitalism. All capitalists want is to make as much money as they can, profit before life. Money is dominant, life is nothing. It's chaos all the way. I thought people would do something about it; I think they'll have to before long."**

**(From A Working Class War, the above extract from the wartime experiences of Harry Shingler, from a Docklands family.)**

## FROM HERE TO THERE & HOW

### HERE

In the mid 1990's unemployment exists bringing with it hardship and social alienation. Poverty, war and insecurity are also problems which governments cannot solve. Social reforms have been unable to solve the day to day problems facing the working class. The free market; the mixed economy and mass nationalisation have also failed those who have to live on wages and salaries. Fierce competition makes life unpleasant and stressful. State owned industries offer no alternative to their private counterparts. The ideas of Lenin and his followers have long been discredited

We have the vote, but are encouraged by Labour, Conservative and the other capitalist politicians to vote for them at elections. They promise everything but deliver nothing. They tell us that there is no alternative.

Is there an alternative to the existing society, capitalism? Socialists believe that there is. Society does not have to exist the way it does now. The exploitative labour market, the trade in a worker's mental and physical abilities, the continual struggle over wages and working conditions, and the lack of control over what is produced and for whom need not continue. There is an alternative. There is a choice about the way life can be organised. There is Socialism.

### THERE

If there was common ownership and democratic control of the means of living, a rational framework could enable men and women to tackle the wide range of current social problems, which capitalist

politicians are powerless to do anything about. Socialism would allow people to decide how they wanted to live. There would be no leaders making decisions for them.

In broad outline Socialism would be a classless society of free men and women socially producing and distributing goods and services to those who need them. Social need rather than profit would be the guiding motivation. Goods would be produced to the highest quality society could realistically attain. The very act of production would be an enjoyable experience.

Since there would be no employers and no coercive wages system, there would also be no unemployment and no class conflict. With no competition there would be social harmony and co-operation. With no nation states or rival groups of capitalists there would be no war. There would be no poverty, because there would be no artificial barrier like the market between production and distribution.

#### HOW

To get from capitalism to Socialism requires more than just an understanding of capitalist society and a desire for Socialism. It also requires political action based upon this knowledge and with the desire for Socialism as its outcome.

Private property prevents the majority from having direct access to what is produced. The institution of private property is protected by the law, enforced by the police, the courts, prisons etc. and the armed forces. In order for private property to be abolished it is necessary for the working class to capture control of the machinery of government, including the above forces, and to use them as an

agent of emancipation. With the establishment of common ownership, the need for this machinery of government to protect private property rights is removed. At present the political powers of coercion are controlled by Parliament. To gain control of this machinery requires a socialist majority actively sending socialist delegates to Parliament. This has to be through a socialist political party with Socialism as its only objective. The Socialist Party of Great Britain exists solely for this purpose.

Once political power has been removed from protecting private property rights, the really important work of solving social problems and making production satisfy human needs can begin.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN**  
of 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road,  
London N12 8SB.

has no connection with any other political party including the party using the same name based at 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN. Persons wishing to send donations, subscriptions etc. should make their cheques payable to  
**SOCIALIST STUDIES**  
at the above address.

Correction:

On page 20 of **Socialist Studies** No. 17 we referred to "Comrade Raspbridge", this should have been spelt "Rasbridge".

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

**NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH** (Next Meeting 15 Jan 1996)  
meets at 7.30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in month at  
Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, London NW6.

Secretary C. May, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road,  
London N12 8SB

### CAMDEN / BLOOMSBURY BRANCH

meets at 6 pm on the 4th Tuesday of month at  
Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1  
Correspondence to the Secretary, S.P.G.B., 31 Caernarvon Road,  
Eynsbury, St. Neots, Cambs. PE19 2RN (Tel: 01480 403345)

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome.  
Those wishing to find out more about the Party and its activities  
should contact the Secretary.

### 1996 LECTURE SERIES

Our next Lecture Series will commence in January on the  
following dates:

Sundays 21 January  
11, 25 February  
10, 24 March  
14, 28 April

Meetings will be held at Marchmont Community Centre,  
62 Marchmont Street, London WC1  
(5 minutes Russell Square & Euston Tube Stations)

3 p.m. Start

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### Socialist Studies - our official Journal

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